UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
39th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 15 December 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 39th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 122: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued)

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/48/SR.39
23 February 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

93-82996 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 122: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued)

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (A/45/745 and A/C.5/48/28)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA) (A/C.5/48/28) and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (A/48/745).

2. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that once again the Committee was being asked to take decisions on large amounts of money at short notice. The Canadian delegation would prefer the matter to be deferred until the next meeting.

3. With regard to paragraph 14 of the Secretary-General's report, if additional resources were needed during the first part of 1994, the correct place to seek them was in the General Assembly rather than in ACABQ. Furthermore, perhaps some of the elements of the proposed additional appropriation could be absorbed by means of savings elsewhere in the programme budget. The Canadian delegation noted in particular the high cost of vehicles. It certainly wanted the operation to go ahead with a proper number of observers properly serviced, but the Committee did have a duty to review the proposals thoroughly.

4. Mr. FRANCIS (Australia) said that the Australian Government was in favour of the activities going ahead. As an interim measure, therefore, the Committee should grant a commitment authority to the Secretary-General. However, any decision should be reviewed in the context of the first performance report for the next biennium. The Secretary-General should certainly try to absorb the additional costs through savings.

5. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the General Assembly had approved an appropriation of about $13 million for 1992. The Secretary-General was now reporting overspending of $61,200 but he was not requesting an additional appropriation for 1992-1993. The overspending would be absorbed through savings reported in the second performance report for the biennium 1992-1993. The Secretary-General was not requesting the same level of resources for 1994-1995: the amount was approximately $9 million for the period 1 January to 31 July 1994. The Advisory Committee did not feel it appropriate that the expenditure should be included in the first performance report for 1994-1995; the 1992 procedure for an additional appropriation should be followed again. The sum was a small one in an area where the United Nations had spent millions since 1960 in its efforts to dismantle apartheid. Its approval should not therefore cause any great problem.

6. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the details of the additional request were given in annex I of the report of the Secretary-General. The main element was salaries: at the end of September the Security Council had agreed to the Secretary-General's request for authorization for an additional 40 observers. As to vehicles, UNOMSA covered a very large area and transport was therefore a big cost element. The Secretariat thought that it would be difficult to absorb the $9 million in the first half of 1994. The overspending of $61,200 was shown under section 2 of the budget in table 2 in the second performance report for 1992-1993 (A/C.5/48/48).

7. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that the Cuban delegation supported the proposal of the Advisory Committee.

8. Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria) said that the Nigerian delegation also supported the ACABQ recommendation and did not see any reason to defer the matter.

9. The CHAIRMAN said that with the consent of the representative of Nigeria he would take it that the Committee wished to defer its consideration of the matter to its next meeting.

10. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.